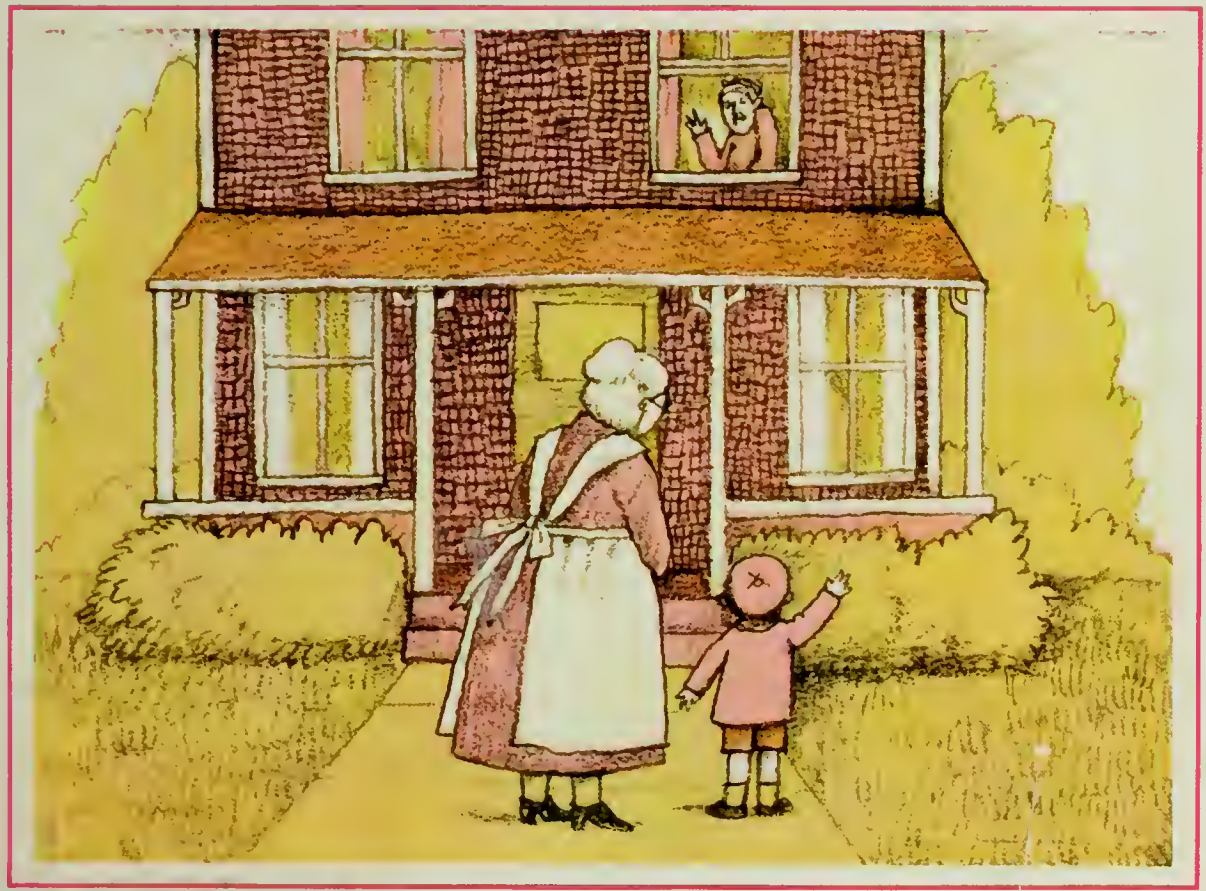
DISCARD

PICTURE PUFFINS

Nana Upstairs & Nana Downstairs



y and pictures by
Tomie de Paola

Tommy loved his family's Sunday visits to his grandmother, Nana Downstairs, and his great-grandmother, Nana Upstairs. When Nana Upstairs dies, it is the closeness of his loving family which comforts him and helps him to accept her death.

"Children will want to hear this over and over again as they puzzle over what it means to be young and old and very old, and finally, to die." —*School Library Journal* (starred review)

"A quietly touching story [that] depicts loving family relationships so that even the very young reader can understand."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"One of the best of the several stories for very young children that shows the love between a child and grandparent, and pictures the child's adjustment to death."
—*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

DISCARD

Mama Upstairs & Mama Downstairs

WEST LAS VEGAS

To Tyree
From Your friend, Emma
339-3833

Nana Upstairs & Nana Downstairs

story and pictures by
Tomie de Paola

for my family
– and D.

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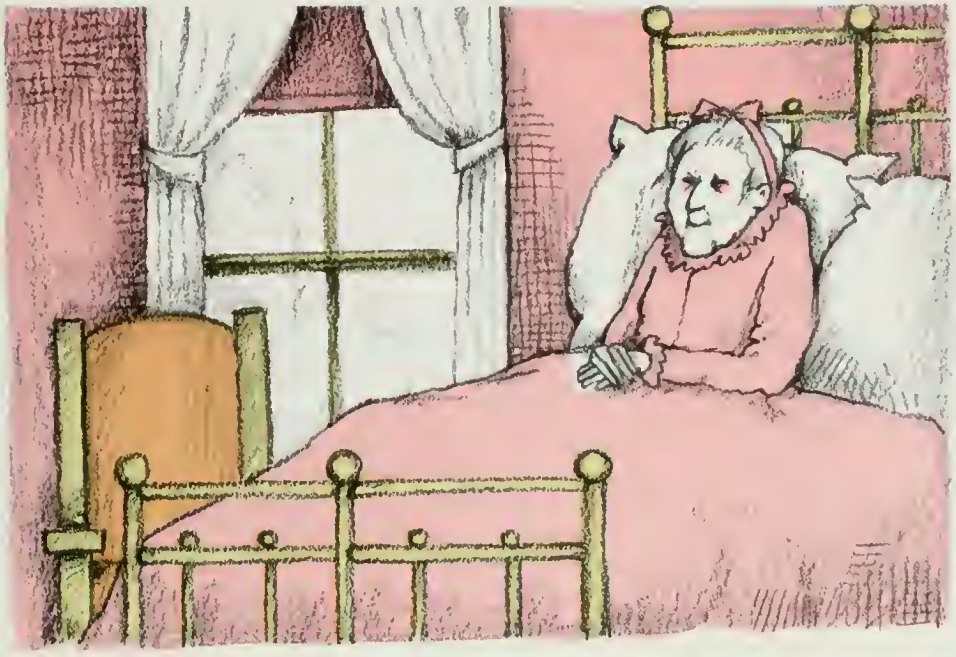
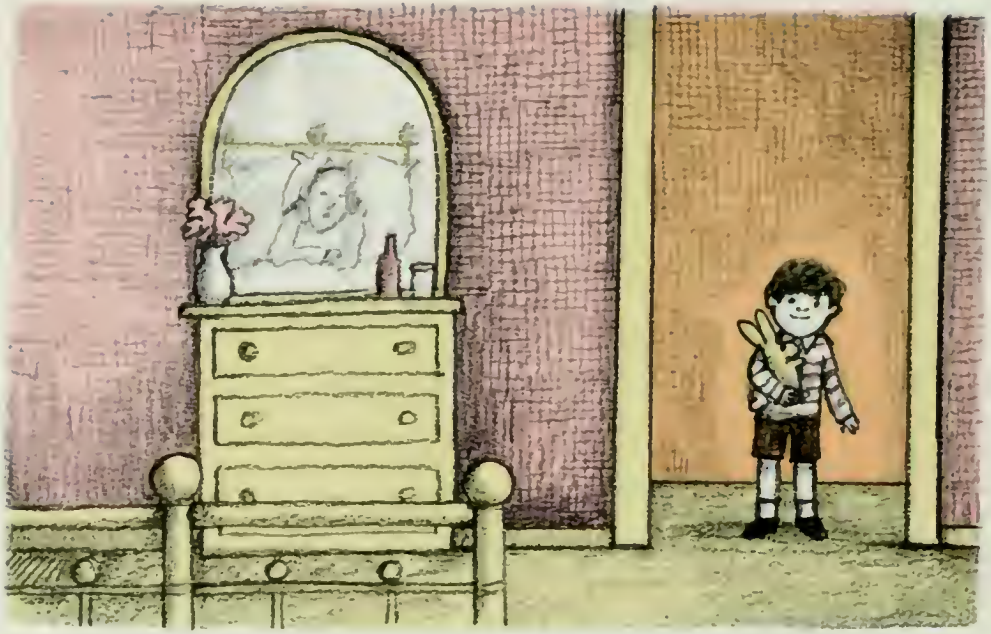
When Tommy was a little boy, he had a grandmother and a great-grandmother. He loved both of them very much.

He and his family would go to visit every Sunday afternoon. His grandmother always seemed to be standing by the big black stove in the kitchen.



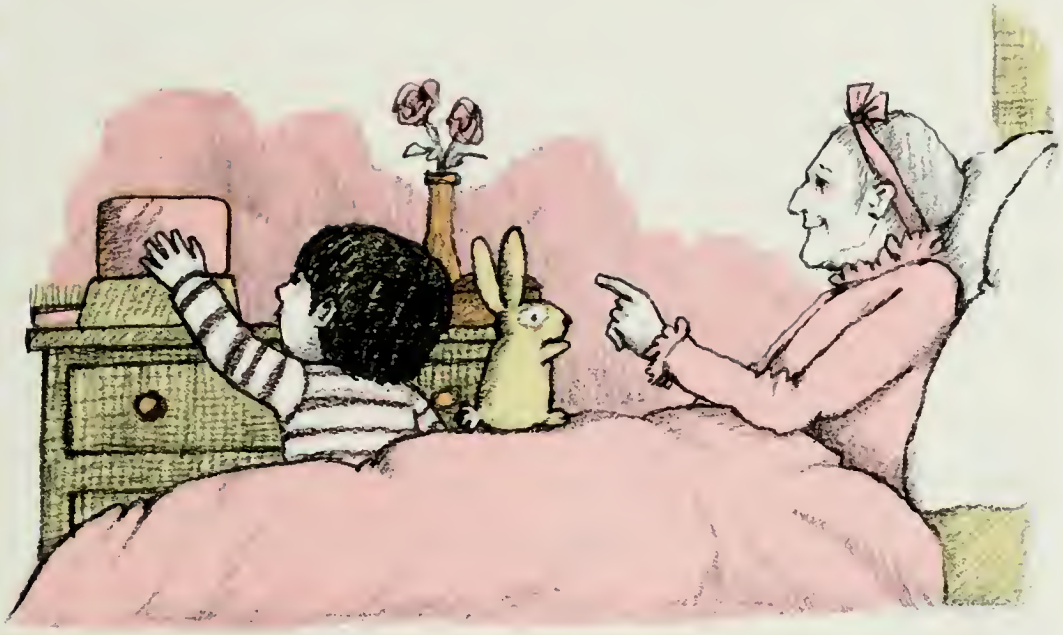
His great-grandmother was always in bed upstairs because she was ninety-four years old.

So Tommy called them Nana Downstairs and Nana Upstairs.



Almost every Sunday was the same.

Tommy would run into the house, say hello to his Grandfather Tom, and Nana Downstairs and then go up the back stairway to the bedroom where Nana Upstairs was.



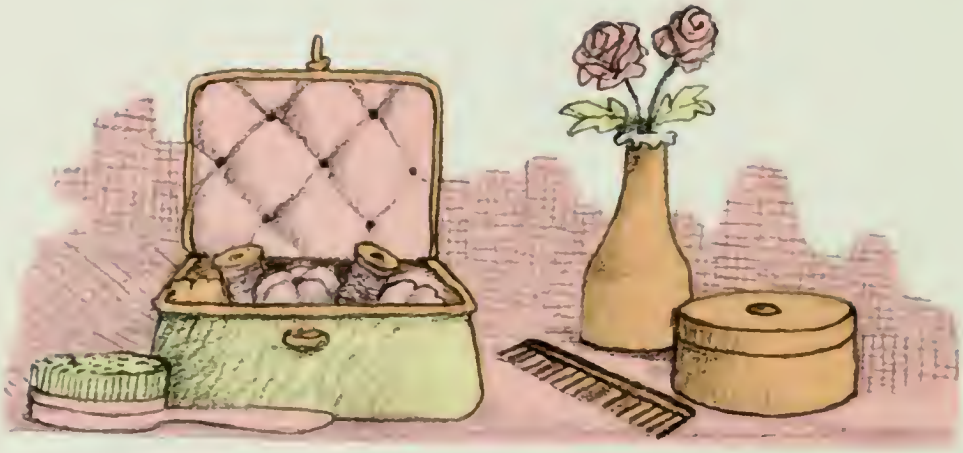
"Get some candy," Nana Upstairs would say. And he would open the lid of the sewing box on the dresser, and there would be candy mints.

Once Nana Downstairs came into the bedroom and helped Nana Upstairs to the big Morris chair and tied her in so she wouldn't fall out.

"Why will Nana Upstairs fall out?" Tommy asked.

"Because she is ninety-four years old," Nana Downstairs said.

"I'm four years old," Tommy said. "Tie me in a chair too!"



So every Sunday, after he found the candy mints in the sewing box on the dresser, Nana Downstairs would come up the back stairway and tie Nana Upstairs and Tommy in their chairs, and then they would eat their candy and talk.

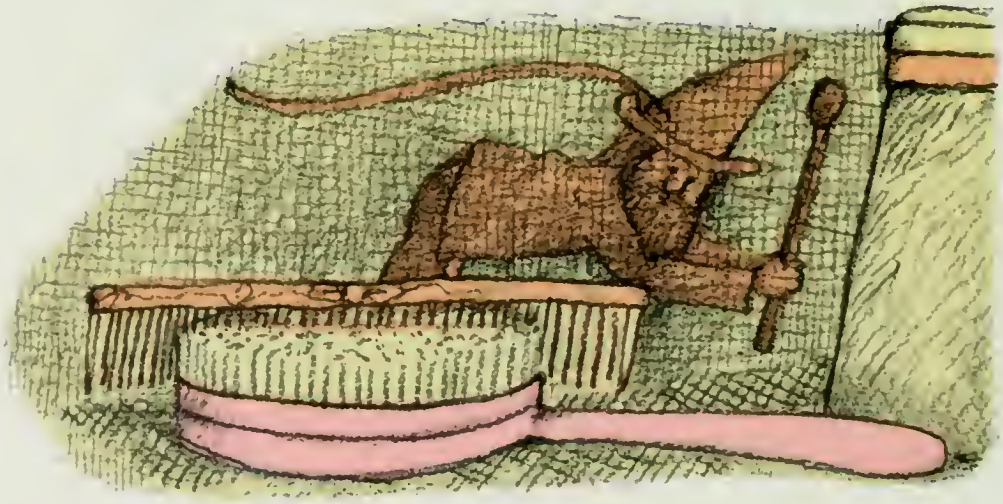
Nana Upstairs told him about the "Little People."

"Watch out for the fresh one with the red hat with the feather in it. He plays with matches," she said.

"I will," said Tommy.

"There he is!" she said. "Over by the brush and comb. See him?"

Tommy nodded.



When Nana Downstairs had finished her work by the big black stove and baked a cake to eat before Tommy went home, she would come back upstairs.

"Now," Nana Downstairs would say as she untied Tommy from his chair. "We must all take our naps."

After their naps, Nana Downstairs would comb out Nana Upstairs' beautiful silver-white hair.

Then Nana Downstairs would comb and brush her own hair.

And she would twist her hair and pin it up on top of her head.

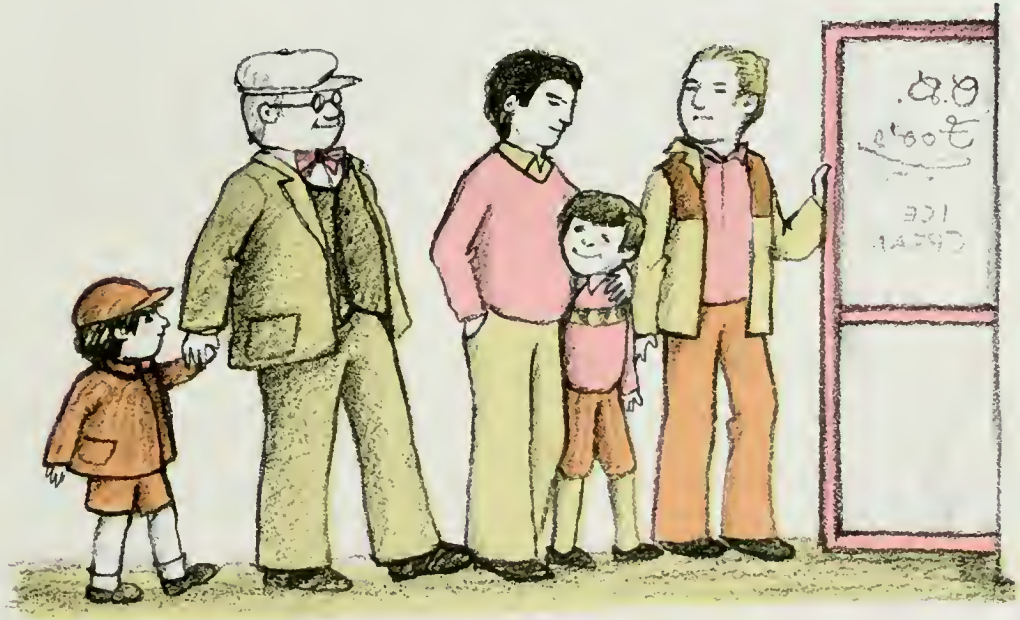
"Now make the 'cow's tail'!" Tommy would say.

One time Tommy's older brother came into the bedroom and saw Nana Upstairs with her hair all down around her shoulders, and he ran away.

"She looks like a witch!" he said.

"She does *not!*" Tommy said. "She's beautiful."

"Time for ice cream!" shouted Grandfather Tom. And Tommy and his brother went with him, and sometimes their father and their Uncle Charles, down to the ice-cream store.



When they got back, it was time for Nana Upstairs to have supper, and Tommy would help carry the tray of milk and crackers up the back stairway.

Once Tommy's father took movies of the whole family. He took movies of Nana Downstairs and Nana Upstairs. And Tommy stood in the middle.

One morning when Tommy woke up at his own house, his mother came in to talk to him.

"Nana Upstairs died last night," she said.

"What's 'died'?" Tommy asked.

"Died means that Nana Upstairs won't be here anymore," Mother answered.

They went to Tom and Nana Downstairs' house, even though it wasn't Sunday.

Tommy ran up the back stairway before he'd even said hello.

He ran into Nana Upstairs' room.

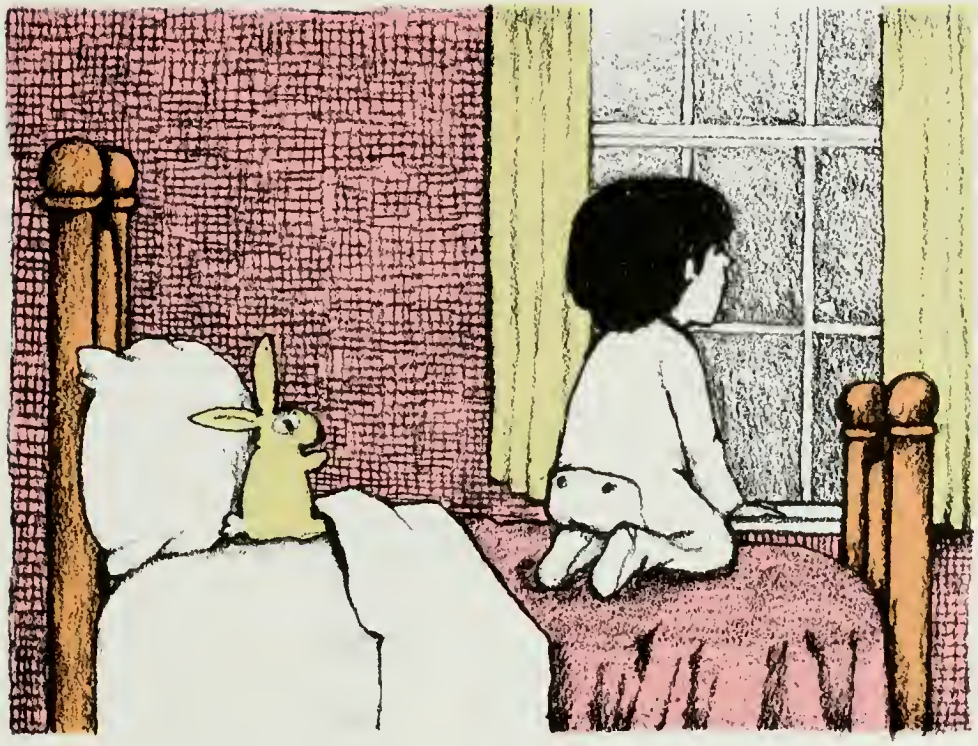
The bed was empty.

Tommy began to cry.

"Won't she ever come back?" he asked.

"No, dear," Mother said softly. "Except in your memory. She will come back in your memory whenever you think about her."

From then on he called Nana Downstairs just plain Nana.



A few nights later, Tommy woke up and looked out his bedroom window at the stars.

All of a sudden, a star fell through the sky. He got up and ran to his mother and father's bedroom.

"I just saw a falling star," he said.

"Perhaps that was a kiss from Nana Upstairs," said Mother.

A long time later, when Tommy had grown up, Nana Downstairs was old and in bed just like Nana Upstairs. Then she died too.

And one night, when he looked out his bedroom window, Tommy saw another star fall gently through the sky.

Now you are both Nana Upstairs, he thought.

Tomie de Paola

has over fifty children's books to his credit, many of which he has both written and illustrated. He studied art at the Pratt Institute and Skowhegan School of Painting and received a Master's of Fine Arts from the California College of Arts and Crafts. He has been awarded the Silver Award in the Franklin Prize Competition, and been commended by the American Institute for Graphic Arts.

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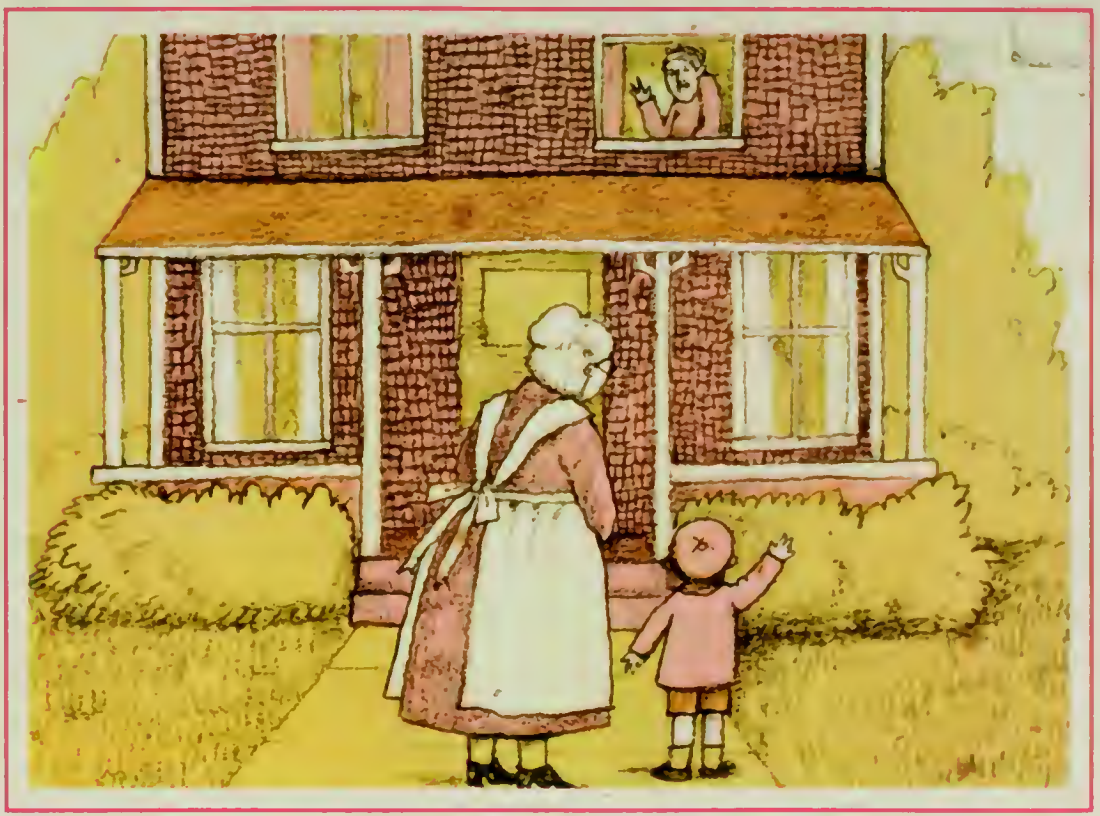

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